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N.C.A.A. Mulls Stiff Standards for Student-Athletes

Critics Are Expected To Seek Delay in Plan

By Mark Pitsch

In an effort to further improve the academic success of college athletes and to answer critics of intercollegiate sports programs, members of the National Collegiate Athletic Association this week will consider several controversial proposals to impose stricter academic eligibility requirements on incoming student-athletes.

The proposals, which would take effect in 1995, build on the eligibility requirements, known as Proposition 48, that N.C.A.A. members approved in 1983 and put in place in 1986.

"There's no question that there will be some people who will not meet the new requirements," said Lorna P. Straus, a University of Chicago biology professor who chairs an N.C.A.A. committee that is co-sponsoring the proposed changes.

"Yes, it's a tougher standard," she added, "but it's a tougher standard with a reason."

Supporters of the measures contend that the new standards would send a strong message to student-athletes, parents, and school systems that athletes need to be as successful in the classroom as they are on the court, track, or field.

"High-school athletes, when they're challenged, they're challenged with a reason."

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N.J. Schools Debate Forced Merger To Achieve Integration

By Peter Schmidt

HACKENSACK, N.J.—In a case with potentially major implications for New Jersey's many small, racially imbalanced school districts, lawyers clashed in state court here last month over whether school systems should be forced to "regionalize," or merge, to achieve racial integration.

The case, argued Dec. 17 before the appellate division of the state superior court, involves three districts that lie close to one another in northern New Jersey but whose ethnic composition—and stands on regionalization—are sharply different.

Officials of Englewood, where most students are black or Latino, have been trying ever since the dispute began seven years ago to get the state to end racial isolation by ordering a merger at the high-school level with the other two districts.

"There is no way to cure this situation without regionalization," Arnold K. Mytelka, a lawyer for the Englewood board of education, told the superior court last month.

But Englewood Cliffs and Tenafly, which

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PROFILES IN TECHNOLOGY



A special 24-page Education Week report on educators striving to harness the power of technology begins opposite page 28.

Reconfigured Goals Panel Will Be Bipartisan, Give Lawmakers a Vote

By Robert Rothman

WASHINGTON—The panel monitoring progress toward the national education goals would be reconfigured so that Congressional representatives would have voting power and the membership of the panel would be evenly split between Democrats and Republicans, under a plan approved here last month.

The agreement, expected to be put into effect this month, was a key part of a broader accord aimed at creating a method for overseeing the development of national standards and a national system of assessments.

Under the plan, approved by the National Council on Education Standards and Testing, the reconstituted goals panel would appoint a 21-member council of state

and local officials, educators, and representatives of the general public, which would coordinate the development of standards in school subjects and the creation of a system of assessments to match them.

The council would then certify standards and assessments as "world class," subject to approval by the goals panel.

The plan is expected to be included in the report of the standards council, which is scheduled to be released later this month. The council last month adopted in principle the language of the report, which will strongly urge that the United States move toward national standards in school subjects and a system of assessments to measure student performance against the standards.

Gov. Roy Romer of Colorado, the co-

Continued on Page 24

Building Engineers' Power and Pay Scrutinized as Schools Tighten Belts

By Ann Bradley

For a few months early last year, William Rankin's Chicago elementary school was in tip-top shape.

The principal, a veteran of the city's public schools, was so delighted that he wrote a memo to a district official.

"For the first time in 14 years," he wrote, "children can wash hands in every wash basin and get a drink from every drinking fountain in the school. All [toilet] leaks have been repaired and washroom floors are finally dry."

But Mr. Rankin's elation was short-lived. After less than four months at the school, the principal recalled recently, the building engineer responsible for the turnaround had an argument with a janitor he supervised, and the engineer opted for a transfer.

While Mr. Rankin said that the current building engineer "tries hard to please," he remains frustrated that the physical condition of his building is essentially beyond his control.

Mr. Rankin's trouble keeping Victor Herbert Elementary School shipshape is not unusual in big-city school systems, observers say, given the enormous clout wielded by building engineers who have little accountability to school principals.

Through labor agreements negotiated over the years, critics say, the engineers who oversee the maintenance and operation of school facilities in many large dis-



William Rankin, the principal of Victor Herbert Elementary School, examines a gaping hole in the school's ceiling.

tricts have gained virtual autonomy in their jobs, excessive control over how schools are used, hefty base salaries, and generous overtime pay that makes it possible for some engineers to earn more than

Continued on Page 21

Strike Is Averted as A.F.T., Staff Union Agree on a Contract

By Ann Bradley

After a grueling 20-hour bargaining session, negotiators for the American Federation of Teachers and the union that represents A.F.T.'s staff employees reached a tentative agreement on a new contract last week, narrowly averting a strike.

Members of the American Federation of Teachers Staff Union had voted unanimously in early December to strike if their negotiating team could not turn back proposals that would have given the A.F.T. management greater latitude in laying off employees.

Representatives of both sides refused late last week to discuss details of the new agreement, which was reached Jan. 2 with the assistance of a mediator after an all-night bargaining session.

The staff union's contract expired at midnight Dec. 31 and was extended hour-by-hour to allow the negotiations to continue.

"Neither side got all they wanted," said Solomon H. Smith Jr., president of the A.F.T.S.U. "These were damn tough negotiations. But we've got something we feel fairly confident the members will ratify."

Members of the staff union are scheduled to vote on the proposed contract Jan. 12.

The staff union, representing 85 employees, has two bargaining units. One is made

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Also in the news

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A look back at some of the top education stories of 1991 and the people who made the news.

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The Rochester, N.Y., school board faces a suit for banning military recruiters from the district's campuses.

12 Whole-Language Dispute
Three new studies provide more ammunition for the hardest-fought battle in the field of reading.

IN SUMMARY

New Year, New Committee

A new era in governance begins for the Boston public schools, as 7 school-committee members appointed by the mayor replace a 13-member elected panel. **Page 7.**

Endorsement Hunting

Five Democratic Presidential hopefuls have entered the process to win the influential backing of the National Education Association. **Page 10.**

Breaking Union Barriers?

The National Education Association is weighing a step that could bring it closer to other labor organizations, including the rival American Federation of Teachers. **Page 15.**

Teacher Shortage Questioned

Despite widespread predictions to the contrary, the nation is unlikely to experience a general shortage of public-school teachers in the 1990's, two new reports from the RAND Corporation conclude. **Page 16.**

E.D. Auditors Fault Honig

U.S. Education Department auditors say that California's school chief has violated conflict-of-interest rules by using his position to financially benefit his wife's educational consulting firm. **Page 36.**

A Change for Chapter 1?

Education Department officials are said to be drawing up rules that would allow children ineligible for Chapter 1 services to participate in the program's activities. **Page 37.**

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SPECIAL ADVERTISING SECTION:**Software Catalog Connection**

A description of free catalogs and informational brochures about educational software.

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ACROSS THE NATION

NATIONAL

Coalition Launches Drive To Place Children's Issues on Policy Agenda

More than 50 children's-advocacy groups have joined forces to kick off a campaign this week to "elevate children's well-being to the top of the public-policy agenda" in 1992.

Based on the premise that children lack the political clout to influence policy-makers, the Coalition for America's Children has decided to raise public awareness about children's issues and to urge voters to challenge candidates and officeholders to adopt positions and policies responsive to children's needs.

The nonpartisan coalition, based in Washington, includes a wide range of national, state, and community-based nonprofit organizations promoting children's health, educa-

tion, and well-being. Among its members are the American Academy of Pediatrics, the National Association of Elementary School Principals, Save the Children, and various state youth-advocacy groups.

Touting the slogan "Who's for Kids, and Who's Just Kidding?," the group will issue buttons, brochures, bumper stickers, and briefing materials that can be used to challenge politicians to ensure children's health, education, safety, security, and freedom from abuse, violence, and drugs.

In a survey the group recently conducted of 1,000 adults, 71 percent said children's programs should be a higher priority for the government, but many said they were skeptical about whether money earmarked for children through government programs actually reaches them.

"Their confidence in government is so low that they're not sure if government is the problem or the solution for their children," said Robert Keeshan, a coalition board

member better known as television's longtime "Captain Kangaroo."

■ **The percentage of teenagers who say they use drugs or alcohol continues to decline**, according to the results of a new federal survey.

The household survey of more than 32,000 people conducted by the National Institute on Drug Abuse found that, among adults, the number who say they use cocaine at least once a month increased by almost one-fifth over last year's total. There was also an increase in the number of adults being treated in emergency rooms for cocaine-related problems.

Among youths ages 12 to 17, however, the percentage who said they used cocaine during the previous month dropped from 0.6 percent in 1990 to 0.4 percent last year. Lower percentages of youths also reported using alcohol, cigarettes, and hallucinogens, the survey found. ■

STATES

Maine Becomes Eighth State To Join Re:Learning Reform

Maine has become the eighth state to join Re:Learning, a cooperative education-reform initiative sponsored by the Education Commission of the States, the Coalition of Essential Schools, and participating states.

Nine school districts in Maine will participate in Re:Learning, a research-based effort that encourages teachers and administrators to redesign their schools to get all students more directly involved in their learning.

"Our investment in Re:Learning becomes even more important during these difficult times," said Gov. John R. McKernan Jr. "I am convinced that the changes we make today will pay off many times when our economic recovery begins."

More than 350 schools around the country are using the Re:Learning approach. Indiana is expected to announce its participation later this month.

■ **Texas state officials must close at least one state school for mentally retarded individuals and move 600 resi-**

dents of similar facilities around the state to placements in the community, under a settlement approved last week in a long-running federal court case.

The agreement is the third approved in the 17-year-old lawsuit challenging the quality of care in state institutions for the mentally retarded. The plaintiffs charged that residents are often inappropriately warehoused or are abused and neglected in the state schools.

In his order, U.S. District Judge Barefoot Sanders said "significant and lasting improvements had been made" in the state's system of care for those individuals.

Judge Sanders said the lawsuit could be dismissed seven days after the first school is closed and residents are relocated.

The court also will monitor the community placements for two more years.

A task force appointed by the state legislature is already at work trying to determine which, if any, of the state's 13 institutions should be closed. The panel is expected to make a recommendation to the governor by March.

Some parents had opposed the agreement because they said their children would not be able to function in the community-based programs. It was favored, however, by other advocates for the mentally retarded, including representatives for the plaintiffs. ■

DISTRICTS

Florida County First To Mandate Family-Related Leave for Workers

The county commission in Dade County, Fla., has passed a measure making it the first local government in the nation to require private businesses to provide family-related unpaid leave.

The measure, approved on an 8-to-1 vote Dec. 17 and scheduled to take effect 90 days from then, requires employers with more than 50 workers to grant up to 90 days of unpaid leave every two years for workers to care for a newborn, adopted, or newly placed foster child; a seriously ill close relative; or the workers' own serious illness.

It applies to county employers, private businesses in Dade County and businesses in Broward County that conduct business with Dade.

While some municipalities have considered family-leave laws covering city workers, experts say the Dade County ordinance makes it the first local government to extend the mandate to private employers.

According to the Women's Legal Defense Fund in Washington, 10 states have family-leave laws that apply to private as well as state employers, while about 7 have laws

A Trip to 'Pencilvania'

A visit to one New Mexico elementary school will find you strolling into Write Avenue and Letter Drive rather than individual grades.

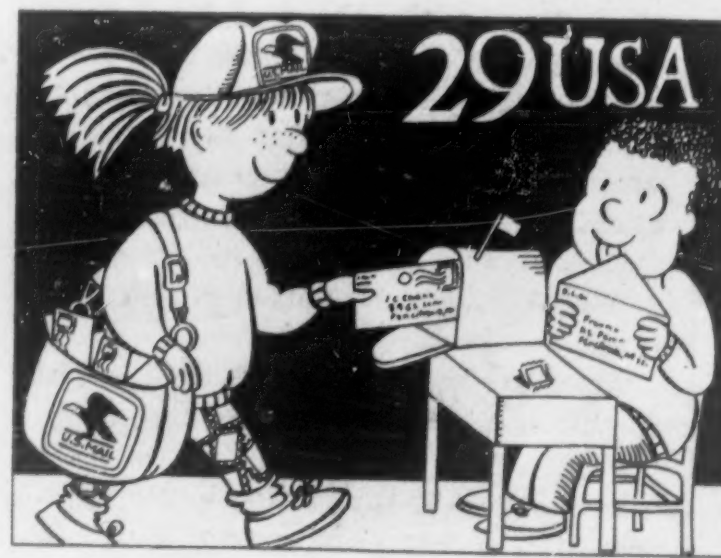
Once there, you will find that ordinary school desks have become "rural address locations" serviced by mail carriers who are under age 12.

For this school year, the 96-student Elida Elementary School has been transformed into "Pencilvania, U.S.A.," a "town" with its own ZIP code—88117.

The U.S. Postal Service chose the school—and even contributed an official mailbox, mailbag, and mail carrier's cap—with the aim of teaching the students how a post office is run.

The students took a field trip to the local post office and watched a videotape to prepare them for the many duties involved, such as sorting and delivering mail.

About three days a week, students spend 15 or 20 minutes



Leila Cabib

writing letters to friends, pen pals, and sometimes teachers, explains Nancy Ward, the school's principal and 1st-grade teacher. The students also design their own stamps, she says.

The increased communication has been helpful on many levels, Ms. Ward says. "If a student needs help, we write to them, and that really ups the ego," she notes.

Every six weeks, the responsibility for running the show is handed down one grade level. Students are given a test, and the high scorers are voted on by their

classmates to determine the current postmaster, his or her assistant, and a mail carrier.

The school's first postmaster, 12-year-old Tony Nandino, said the best part of the job by far was "seeing the kids when they got the mail, especially the younger kids."

"Their faces would light up and everything," he said. —W.M.

covering only state employees and several others have maternity-leave laws protecting women's jobs for the period of pregnancy-related disability.

In Florida, a law requiring state employers to grant workers up to six months of job-protected unpaid maternity leave was expanded last spring to include leave for fathers and to cover adoption or the serious illness of a family member.

At the federal level, family-leave measures have been approved by both houses of the Congress and await action by a conference committee, but the Bush Administration has threatened a veto.

■ The Durham County (N.C.) Board of Commissioners has sued the North Carolina Board of Education, charging that the state board exceeded its authority in rejecting the commissioners' plan to merge the Durham city and county schools.

The commissioners, who filed their complaint last month in Wake County Superior Court, want the court to order approval of the merger plan.

The main issue of contention in the merger proposal, which would combine the predominantly white county schools with the mostly black city schools, involves the method of electing the new school board. County residents have complained that they would not have enough control over the merged system.

"The level of disagreement about the merger within the county," said Edwin Speas, a senior deputy attorney general for the state, "suggested that implementation of the plan might not be successful and, thus, not in the interests of the children."

When community opposition to the original merger plan surfaced last fall, the state board of education asked Durham County officials to develop an alternative proposal. But the commissioners resubmitted the same plan, which the state board subsequently rejected.

In their suit, the Durham commissioners argue that the state board lacks the authority to reject a merger plan based on community opposition and that the board acted "arbitrarily and capriciously."

The board of education has 30 days to respond to the suit.

■ A group of Cleveland homeowners late last month successfully blocked a spate of administrative-personnel actions by the city's lame-duck board of education.

The group, consisting mostly of activists on housing and other issues, on Dec. 24 obtained a temporary restraining order from Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Judge Frank J. Gorman preventing the board from appointing Alan Mitchell, the district's financial administrator, as treasurer.

Roberta L. Reichert, a housing activist who mobilized the homeowners' group, said she had questioned whether Mr. Mitchell was qualified to be treasurer. The judge upheld a state law requiring that the appointment of the treasurer be left until new board members took office on Jan. 2.

Two days later, the homeowners' group obtained a second restraining order from Common Pleas Judge Michael J. Corrigan preventing the outgoing board from awarding two-year contracts to 139 administrators. The judge said the administrators had not received evaluations and nominations for contracts from the district superintendent, as required by law.

The group also persuaded U.S. District Judge Frank J. Battisti, who oversees the city's school-desegregation plan, to order the school board to follow a state directive prohibiting it from approving the administrators' contracts.

■ Homeless children in New York City face a wide variety of obstacles that

may prevent them from even attending school, a study asserts.

Advocates for Children, a local nonprofit group, charges the city's board of education with ignoring federal regulations that guarantee homeless children access to educational services.

The group based its study on interviews with 22 New York community-school-district coordinators responsible for ensuring that the nearly 3,000 children in the city's emergency shelters receive an education.

Among the findings from the study, entitled "And Miles to Go . . .":

- Homeless preschool-age children rarely are placed in early-childhood programs, because of inadequate outreach efforts.

- Homeless kindergarten-age children routinely are denied access to schooling because programs in their districts are full or because they are placed in schools far from their shelters without being provided adequate transportation.

- The school system often fails to identify high-school students as homeless, so they do not receive the same services as other students at risk of dropping out.

- A lack of clothing and school supplies prevents some homeless children from attending school.

- School personnel are often insensitive to the needs of homeless children.

In response, city school officials have said that inadequate funding has created limited space in preschool programs for all children. They have acknowledged that homeless kindergartners sometimes must attend schools outside their shelter district, but said that transportation is provided in such cases. Furthermore, officials said, support services for homeless children in school and at shelters have been strengthened.

■ School officials in Lake Forest, Ill., are weighing the fate of an elementary-school principal who has been found guilty of encouraging teachers to cheat on standardized student-achievement tests.

Linda Chase was suspended from her \$67,000-a-year position as principal of Cherokee Elementary School in November, when the district, in a Chicago suburb, began an investigation into why the school's students posted extraordinarily high scores on standardized achievement tests. The district later charged Ms. Chase with eight counts of encouraging faculty members to cheat in the administering and scoring of the tests.

A Lake County judge appointed James C. Bakk, a local lawyer, to hear the charges. Testimony was presented to packed audiences in five unusual public sessions.

Late last month, Mr. Bakk issued a report concluding that the district had proved five of its charges.

Mr. Bakk found that Ms. Chase directed teachers to erase and change answers written by pupils in their test booklets; distributed copies of the Stanford Achievement Test to teachers months before they were to be given; gave teachers classroom materials on subject matter that would later be covered on the tests; encouraged cheating by faculty members; and manipulated the distribution of state assessments to 3rd-grade teachers in violation of test guidelines.

Mr. Bakk said the district did not prove the three other allegations against Ms. Chase.

The district board was to meet last week to consider whether to demote Ms. Chase, who has denied all the charges, to a teaching job.

The district began the investigation when students at the school began scoring far better on the tests than students at the other three elementary schools in the district. Students' scores reportedly were as much as 40 percent higher than those at the other schools.

DIMENSIONS

Poverty and Education

Young children with better-educated parents are much less likely to be poor than are children of parents with a limited education, according to a report by the National Center for Children in Poverty.

Based on recent Census Bureau data, the center, an affiliate of Columbia University's school of public health, reports that the poverty rate among children under age 6 whose parents had less than a high-school education was 62 percent in 1989, compared with 7 percent among those who had at least one parent with more than a high-school diploma.

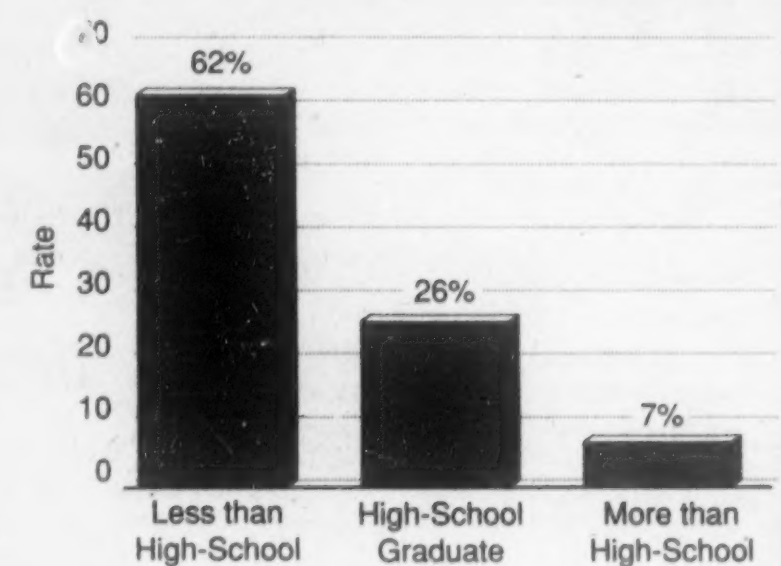
The poverty rate was 26 percent among children with one parent who had no education beyond high school, suggesting that "a high-school diploma by no means assures a decent standard of living in the United States," the center reports.

Better-educated parents have access to more job opportunities, are able to work full time, and have more job security than their less-educated counterparts, the center found.

However, minority children under age 6 are more likely to be poor than white children, regardless of their parents' educational attainment. The poverty rate of children with a parent with more than a high-school education in 1989 was 10 percent for Hispanics, 22 percent for blacks, and 15 percent for other minorities. The rate was only 5 percent for white children.

Copies of the report, "Five Million Children: 1991 Update," are available for \$3 each from the National Center for Children in Poverty, 154 Haven Ave., New York, N.Y. 10032. Make checks payable to Columbia University.

Poverty Rates for Children Under Age 6 by Education Level of the Better-Educated Parent: 1989



Source: National Center for Children in Poverty

UPDATE

■ The Seattle Board of Education has voted to require its 10 high schools and one alternative program to distribute condoms to students.

The measure, which was approved by the board last month, contains no details about how the program will be implemented. Instead, the board asked Superintendent William Kendrick to present an implementation plan at a later meeting.

A spokesman for the district said the condom-distribution plan is not likely to begin in schools until the 1992-93 school year.

PEOPLE

■ The Michigan State Board of Education has unanimously chosen Robert E. Schiller, a deputy superintendent of instruction in Delaware, to be the state's new superintendent of public instruction.

Mr. Schiller, 44, was one of five finalists for the \$83,100-a-year position left vacant when Donald L. Bemis resigned in June under pressure from Republicans on the board.

■ W. Frank Blount, the president of the New American Schools Development Corporation, is resigning next month to become chief executive officer of an Australian telecommunications corporation.

Mr. Blount, who had been on loan from the American Telephone and Telegraph Company, led the new-schools corporation since its inception last summer.

Officials said the search for a successor has already begun.

■ Judith E. Lanier, the dean of the college of education at Michigan State University,

With its decision, Seattle joins New York City, Philadelphia, and San Francisco, among other districts, in voting to begin condom-distribution programs in schools. (See *Education Week*, Dec. 11, 1991.)

In a related development, the Chelsea, Mass., school committee voted last month to allow condoms to be distributed in the district's high school.

In doing so, the school committee overruled a stand against condom distribution taken by the Boston University management team that is running the district under a three-year contract. It is the first time the school committee has overruled the management team on a policy issue.

has resigned to work full time for the Michigan Partnership for New Education.

Ms. Lanier said recently that she expects to begin her new job some time in the next six months.

The Michigan Partnership, which links business, education, and government, hopes to fund 25 "professional-development schools" to prepare new teachers.

■ Superintendent of Education Wilmer S. Cody of Louisiana will step down from his post on Jan. 12, the day his contract expires.

Mr. Cody, who announced his resignation last month, has been superintendent since 1988. He previously was the superintendent of schools in Montgomery County, Md.

The Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education is expected to discuss a successor for Mr. Cody at its Jan. 14 meeting.

It is unclear, however, if the board can legally name a permanent successor because board elections were postponed from last fall. A state law prevents the board from hiring superintendents who will serve for a longer period than members of the state board.